

**KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION RETREAT
MAY 13-14, 2008**

**BERRY HILL MANSION
MUSIC ROOM
FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY**

SUMMARY MINUTES

The Kentucky Board of Education held its annual retreat meeting at Berry Hill Mansion in the Music Room, Frankfort, Kentucky. The Board conducted the following business:

Wednesday, May 13, 2008

SWEARING-IN OF NEW MEMBERS

At 8:45 a.m., Judge Reed Rhorer conducted the swearing-in of the following newly appointed Kentucky Board of Education members: Dorie Combs, Austin Moss, Stephen B. Neal, and Brigitte Ramsey.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Joe Brothers called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. local time.

ROLL CALL

Present for the meeting were C.B. Akins, Kaye Baird, Joe Brothers, Dorie Combs, Jeanne Ferguson, Judy Gibbons, Doug Hubbard, Austin Moss, Stephen B. Neal and Brigitte Ramsey. Absent was Billy Harper. However, Mr. Harper joined the retreat on the second day, May 14, along with Jim Applegate, who represented the Council on Postsecondary Education. Mr. Harper will be sworn-in at the June meeting.

WELCOME AND AGENDA OVERVIEW

Chair Brothers welcomed the new members to service on the Kentucky Board of Education. He briefly went over the agenda and time schedule for the retreat. Brothers then asked each member and the Department staff present to introduce themselves.

TEAMBUILDING ACTIVITY

Deputy Commissioner Elaine Farris and Associate Commissioner Jamie Spugnardi led a team building activity for board members.

ROLE OF STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION

Chair Brothers explained that Brenda Welburn, Executive Director of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), could not get out of Washington,

D.C. on a flight to Kentucky last night and said that Secretary of Education Helen Mountjoy had agreed to do the session dealing with the role of state boards of education. He then turned the presentation over to the Secretary.

Secretary Mountjoy first asked the board members to articulate their vision for education and the responses included the following:

- Getting to proficiency
- Love of learning/lifelong learners
- Mastering basic skills and then higher order thinking skills
- Getting a job/being successful
- School as a challenging place that is also fun
- Meeting students where they are and meeting their needs
- Removing barriers to learning
- Education being a tool to rise above poverty
- Ethical citizens result from education

Mountjoy then asked for the members to articulate what the board's mission is that will enable the vision to occur and the following responses were shared:

- Set policy
- Implement access
- Intervention
- Interact with the people in the trenches
- Create an environment conducive to learning

The Secretary emphasized that as a board, the members must create an environment to enable the vision to happen and also articulate the vision.

The next topics that Secretary Mountjoy asked members to think about were the challenges they face and how to accomplish the work. She emphasized the following:

- The board will not be able to please everyone and this work is not for the faint-hearted.
- The board must stay focused on the important things and remember that it must comply with the law.
- Policy cannot be based on anecdotes but instead must be based on relevant data.
- Members must bring their experiences to the table but must be able to move beyond these.
- Preparation for board meetings is critical. If members do not understand issues, then clarification must be sought.
- The people of Kentucky are relying on the board to make decision that will set the tone for education in the Commonwealth.

C.B. Akins then expressed that it becomes frustrating when the board makes policy and then a decision made by the legislature negates it.

Mountjoy responded that the state constitution says education is the sole responsibility of the General Assembly and the Kentucky Board of Education is a creature created by the legislature to carry out policy. She said it is unfortunate at times that they have the trump

card to play. The Secretary commented that education is too important to be trapped in politics.

Commissioner Jon Draud added that the system works most of the time but stated this legislative session was dysfunctional. He stated that at this point in time, the commitment from policy makers to finance education is not obvious.

Next, Secretary Mountjoy talked about how members of a state board of education must work together and highlighted the following:

- If everyone thinks alike, nobody thinks very much.
- A board member has no power as an individual because the board as a body makes decisions. The power of a state board exists as a group.
- If a member cannot support the decisions of the board, then he/she needs to rethink whether he/she needs to be on the board.
- Value exists in discussion and disagreement. Members must agree to disagree without being disagreeable and must treat each other with respect.
- The seven deadly sins of ineffective government from Jamie Orlikoff are to be avoided as follows:
 - Seeing oneself as representing a particular group or region
 - Having a lack of mission focus
 - Resisting change rather than leading it
 - Making do with irrelevant, useless information
 - Reluctance to dump the dead wood
 - Maintaining outmoded structures
 - Working without a job description

MEDIA RELATIONS

Division Director Lisa Gross led a session on dealing effectively with the media. She distributed a PowerPoint with tips to which the board members can refer. Highlights included:

- To successfully deal with the media, be prompt, prepared, informed, honest, concise, accessible and first to talk publicly about a situation.
- Avoid responding to "What do you think . . .?" questions.
- Familiarize yourself with the experts in organizations and call them for answers when needed.
- There is no such thing as "off the record".
- Avoid the loaded questions trap.
- Avoid responding to touchy questions when reporters relay someone else's comments on the issue.
- Strike the phrase "no comment" from your vocabulary.
- Watch out for tricky lead-ins such as "I heard that . . .", "I'm not familiar with how your school . . .", or "Would you say that . . ."
- Be careful when someone asks a question and then does not respond after you reply hoping that the long pause will make you want to say more.

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Deputy Commissioner Elaine Farris led the session on discussion and understanding of the strategic plan progress report. The members were divided into four groups, one on each of the strategic plan goals, and each group was asked to come up with a list of questions/issues on their goal to report back to the full group. The following were reported on each goal:

High Student Performance --

- There is a lot of data in this area and it is hard to know where to focus.
- A conflict seems to exist with excelling on CATS and preparing for college.
- There may be too much time spent on the affective and not enough on the task.
- The difference in achievement between males and females is not openly discussed very much.
- Black males are the most prominent subgroup in the achievement gap.

High Quality Teaching and Administration

- The primary data related to school leaders is test data and this does not assist the board in knowing what to do to improve in this area. We need to figure out how to measure the effectiveness of school leaders.
- Teachers are also defined relative to test scores. We need to know what defines a good teacher and how to evaluate this.
- The numbers of teachers participating in effective professional development is not strong. Also, what defines effective professional development?
- Other areas of concern include mentor teachers, coaches, highly skilled educators, and diversity in school leaders/teachers.
- How can we get top teachers in the right schools?
- Teacher evaluations vary across the state.
- We have a lot of data but perhaps not the right data to answer our questions.
- Teacher preparation, particularly in math and science, must be more standardized across the state.

Strong and Supportive Environment for Each School and Every Child

- We must have respect across the board and no tolerance for any deviation from high expectations.
- Facilities issues exist that need attention.
- Parents must be empowered and the community must take ownership for education.
- We must make teachers and staff know they are valued.
- There is need for a stronger feeder program.
- We must never be satisfied with where we are and must always want to do better.
- We must move from No Child Left Behind to all children being proficient.

High Performing Schools and Districts

- We need to look at placement of highly skilled educators. Every school would benefit from having this kind assistance. How can we recruit more highly skilled educators?

- How can we meet proficiency? Do test scores have to be the only indicator for meeting proficiency?
- Elementary schools are doing well but there is a huge drop at the middle and high school levels. What can we do to move this success to the upper levels?
- We need to look at governance in local school districts. It is taking time to change the focus to instructional/educational leadership.
- Perhaps we need to examine paying for teachers to get their master's degrees.

COMMISSIONER'S TASK FORCE ON ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Commissioner Draud updated the board on the formation of the Task Force on Assessment and Accountability. He indicated that letters of invitation had gone out to the groups who are being asked to send a representative, key legislators and education policy makers. Draud stated that David Spence of the Southern Regional Education Board will facilitate the meetings. He explained that the goal is to come to agreement on what Kentucky's system should include so that all parties can be supportive of that system. The commissioner said he hoped the first meeting of the task force would occur in July.

BLUE RIBBON PANEL ON INTERVENTIONS IN LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS: SUMMARY OF WORK AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Deputy Commissioner Elaine Farris led a session on the work of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Interventions in Low-Performing Schools. She used a PowerPoint that conveyed the following:

- The charge of the Panel is to review intervention strategies that have been successful in improving academic achievement in low-performing schools in Kentucky and other states, in spite of barriers to learning like poverty and poverty-related issues.
- The expected outcomes of the panel's work are:
 - Determine the best possible strategies for intervention and make recommendations on their findings.
 - Make recommendations for how KDE may intervene and provide assistance differently to dramatically improve student achievement in our lowest performing schools and districts.
 - Make recommendations for a legislative package to deal with the lowest performing schools and districts.
- The panel members were selected to assure broad representation of various stakeholder groups with interest and expertise in interventions in low-performing schools, while assuring gender, minority, urban, rural and geographic diversity. Also, the panel includes teachers, principals, superintendents, representatives for school councils and school board members, parent/community members, higher education representatives, business representatives, the Education Cabinet, KBE and KDE.
- The panel has held three meetings to date.
- At the first meeting on February 25, the following occurred:
 - KDE staff provided information about how KDE identifies low-performing schools and who is and is not on track to reach proficiency by 2014.

- Groups discussed and decided on their top six recommendations to improve low-performing schools.
- These recommendations were compiled into a document and organized under the four headings of Instruction, Leadership, Culture/High Expectations and Community Engagement.
- At the second meeting on March 28, the following occurred:
 - The panel members heard from the Kentucky School Boards Association about their Lighthouse Project work with local boards of education.
 - The panel members were broken into four groups to hear presentations from leaders of high-performing schools and districts about the practices they felt were making the most difference in increasing student achievement.
 - The panel members asked that these practices be incorporated with the February work into an Interventions Matrix.
- At the third meeting on May 5, the following occurred:
 - The panel heard from Blake Haselton, Kentucky Association of School Superintendents, about the Voluntary Partnership Assistance Teams (VPAT) process.
 - The panel received information on the Turnaround Challenge by Mass Insight, a research group.
 - The panel broke into three groups to obtain more information and input from the members in three areas: a) most effective intervention strategies, b) providing KDE assistance to schools and districts differently, and c) a legislative package.
- The three areas of focus for panel work are:
 - Intervention strategies
 - KDE assistance in different ways
 - Legislative package
- In regard to intervention strategies:
 - The groups that discussed intervention strategies had some additional recommendations about the strategies and how they should be organized and presented.
 - In response, the interventions were organized around the Mass Insight research model: Readiness to learn, Readiness to Teach and Readiness to Act.
- In regard to a legislative package:
 - The group that discussed a legislative package recommended changes regarding how KDE intervenes in and supports schools that are chronically low-performing.
 - In response, KDE has begun to analyze the currently existing statutes and develop new language for inclusion, and will continue to work with KDE legal staff for additional guidance on how this work should move forward.
- In regard to KDE assistance in different ways:
 - The group that discussed how KDE should provide assistance differently came up with ideas for an intervention and support model they would recommend.
 - In response, KDE has outlined a draft of a process titled: "KDE Assistance: A Systemic Model of Intervention and Support".

- Future Work for the Blue Ribbon Panel includes:
 - At least one additional meeting to gather input and feedback on KBE/KDE recommendations will be needed.
 - The goal is to have the work ready for implementation for the 2008-09 school year.

INTERNAL BOARD BUSINESS

The following items were discussed under Internal Board Business:

- Chair Brothers indicated that the members were sent information on the services of NASBE and were being asked whether to pay the membership dues to that organization. Doug Hubbard moved to pay the NASBE dues and Kaye Baird seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- Chair Brothers indicated members received a copy of the KBE Policy Manual and asked if there were any areas where changes needed to occur. Discussion occurred on the election procedures for officers relative to term limits, nominations from the floor in addition to a slate coming forward from the nominating committee and a requirement of being on the board for one year before being eligible to be an officer. To determine if any of the changes should be proposed, Chair Brothers appointed an ad hoc committee consisting of C.B. Akins, Chair; Judy Gibbons; Doug Hubbard; and Brigitte Ramsey to look at these topics and bring forward a recommendation to the Board at the June meeting.
- The board members asked for hard copy mailings to cease and for everything to be sent via email.
- Chair Brothers reminded members that the graduation at KSB would occur on May 22 at 6:30 p.m. in the auditorium and the one at KSD would occur on May 23 at 2:00 p.m. in the gymnasium. He asked that any members planning on attending let Mary Ann Miller know so that the schools could be notified.

Thursday, May 14, 2008

FUTURE DIRECTION

Deputy Commissioner Elaine Farris began the day by reviewing the work of the board that occurred yesterday. She then explained that the background established yesterday would now be built on to move on to recommendations for future work. Farris noted that the Board members would be divided into three groups as follows: Instruction and Balanced Assessment, Leadership and Low-performing Schools. She said that the groups would rotate so that members would have the opportunity to participate in each topic. Farris stated that the time on each topic would be a combination of information sharing from Department staff and gathering input/suggestions for future work from Board members.

The rest of the morning was spent on this activity. At the end of these group sessions, Deputy Commissioner Farris summarized that staff had charted the discussions and will be analyzing what was shared. She indicated that a follow-up discussion would come forward at the August KBE meeting.

Deputy Commissioner Kevin Noland then moved on to discuss legislation. He noted that the 2009 legislative session will be non-budgetary in nature and explained that this type of session usually does not consider as many bill proposals as during a budgetary session. Noland commented that the Board will be receiving recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Panel and the Task Force on Assessment and Accountability that will need to be examined for legislative implications. He asked if after today's discussion on future work if these are other things that might need to be considered as possible legislation.

The following comments were made:

- It would help to be able to put pressure on superintendents to take advantage of the CEO regional networks in places where they are not doing so.
- Perhaps authority needs to be pursued to be able to remove superintendents who have been in their positions for awhile and have continued to have a chronically low-performing school(s) or district. A requirement should be added to the current law on academic achievement.
- A list of what is essential to have in order to get to proficiency must be communicated to the legislature in 2009.
- The Kentucky Board of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education will need to collaborate on the topic of financial aid.
- A possible legislative package on middle and high school reform may need to come forward with specific strategies, funding and professional development.
- A long-range plan needs to be developed on how to get the General Assembly to fund schools.
- The Board needs to look for opportunities to meet with the governor, Council on Postsecondary Education and Education Professional Standards Board on working together to promote common issues.
- Perhaps the teacher evaluation regulation needs to be revised to implement a statewide evaluation system.

Deputy Commissioner Noland brought this topic to a close and said that staff would bring back a list of legislative proposals for consideration at the August meeting.

INTERNAL BOARD BUSINESS (CONT'D)

Chair Brothers indicated that the Board needed to complete the items from the agenda under Internal Board Business and the following discussion occurred:

- Regarding the highly skilled educator selection process, the request was made for the selection committee that makes the final selection to be diverse. Additionally, it was suggested that in order to build greater capacity, highly skilled educators could be personnel out of a district who can be trained and then sent back into their district.
- Relative to Board meeting dates, Mary Ann Miller was asked to modify the meeting dates proposal so that each year reflects two one-day meetings out of Frankfort for the purpose of visiting schools and meeting with local superintendents and educators. She was asked to bring the revised proposal back to the June meeting.

- Mary Ann Miller was asked to arrange a dinner on the first evening of the June meeting to honor the outgoing board members and department Planning Committee members who are retiring.
- Mary Ann Miller was asked to add a "Good News" section back to each Board meeting agenda so that positive items could be shared.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.